



Press Release

Dubai to host Middle East's largest disabilities expo

AccessAbilities 2016 to support 750 million special needs people worldwide, over 50 million in Middle East

Sheikh Ahmed: AccessAbilities 2016 a step-forward to making Dubai world's friendliest city for disabled by 2020

Over 150 exhibitors to showcase smart solutions, technologies and facilities for people with disabilities

Experts, decision makers from 30 countries on common platform to discuss challenges and solutions in special needs sector

DUBAI, September 27, 2015: Over 750 million individuals with disabilities and special needs worldwide, 50 million of whom are in the Middle East, get an opportunity to explore world's latest and best smart solutions and services as Dubai hosts AccessAbilities 2016, the first-of-its-kind expo aimed at enhancing the quality of life for disabled and special needs people, to be held from February 8-10, 2016, at the Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre, with a strong support and participation from government and private organisations.

The exhibition is in line with the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE's Vice-President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, to build hope, build life, build the future and make people from all walks of life happy.

AccessAbilities 2016 is driven by the goal set by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown prince of Dubai and Chairman of Dubai Executive Council, to make Dubai the world's best city for individuals with special needs by 2020. UAE is moving to its goal of becoming exemplar in every sphere and the latest Global Competitiveness Report by the World Economic Forum has ranked





UAE 3rd in quality of infrastructure, 3rd in strong public trust in leaders and 5th in the world for high government efficiency.

The expo will be supported by key government bodies including Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA), Dubai Municipality, Community Development Authority (CDA), General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA) in Dubai, and Dubai Customs as the strategic partners along with private sector organisations in technology, telecommunication, healthcare, aviation, hospitality, tourism, education, infrastructure, facilities management and other areas from more than 30 countries.

His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, President of Dubai Civil Aviation Authority, Chairman of Dubai Airports, Chairman and Chief Executive of Emirates Airline and Group, who is the **Patron for AccessAbilities**, said: “The UAE has a visionary leader in His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who is committed to providing unparalleled opportunities for special needs individuals and prove their abilities in a friendly and flexible community environment. The expo will contribute to realizing this vision by bringing in the best of solutions, services and products from across the globe on a common platform.”

Sheikh Ahmed said the expo has a noble aim of integrating special needs individuals into the society and enhancing their contribution. He said the history is full of examples of people with disabilities and special needs who excelled and contributed to the society in a big way.

“The expo is also aimed at further inspiring government authorities and private sector to integrate individuals with disabilities and special needs into the society by helping them overcome their daily challenges and ensuring their services are easily accessible to this growing segment of our community,” added His Highness.

The first edition of the unique expo will mark another milestone in the UAE’s journey to becoming the world’s friendliest place for disabled and special needs individuals as well as their families.

AccessAbilities is being organised by Reed Exhibitions and Nadd AlShiba PR and Event Management. The exhibition will be spread over an area of 8,000 square metres and will feature a Knowledge Centre along with dedicated activity areas.

From robotics, special purpose computers, specialized software for communication to inclusive learning material and aids, prosthetics, positioning device sand other





assistive and rehabilitative technology, AccessAbilities 2016 will present the latest smart technologies that can lead individuals with disabilities toward better and independent lives.

AccessAbilities comes at a highly relevant time as countries worldwide deal with the challenge of increase in number of people with disabilities and special needs.

The UAE is taking numerous initiatives aimed at empowering individuals with disabilities and special needs and integrating into the society.

Dubai's 'My Community-A City for Everyone' initiative, is Dubai Government's strategic goal to be the world's friendliest city for people with special needs by the year 2020.

The legal and legislative frameworks and initiatives in the UAE aim to enhance services infrastructure that provides access to all the facilities and benefit from all the services, provide excellent health care to people with disabilities, as well as supportive social services, and create a broad societal awareness that contributes to integrating people with disabilities and confirm their participation in community development.

All government departments, institutions and bodies across the UAE are taking necessary measures that would lead to concrete and tangible steps to support previous and present positive efforts in this direction. The Roads and Transport Authority (RTA), for instance, has modified its infrastructure to meet the needs of people with special needs while the Dubai Municipality will be restructuring all major parks in the emirate to make them more accessible and friendly for disabled people within the next two years. The UAE also aims to have sign language and braille commonplace by 2020.

His Highness Sheikh Hamdan has affirmed that disability cannot be considered a reason to withhold the disabled to positively participate in the society. By bringing the latest technologies, facilities and services that can empower people with disabilities, Access Abilities will contribute to the noble vision of UAE's leadership to improve lives of individuals with special needs and make them our partner in all our achievements.

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